

Torrance, California
September 26, 1944

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF TORRANCE

The City Council of the City of Torrance convened in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Torrance, California, on Tuesday, September 26, 1944, at 7:45 P.M.

Mayor Tolson called the meeting to order.

Clerk Bartlett called the roll, those answering present being Councilmen: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. Absent: Councilmen: None.

All those present in the Council Chamber saluted the Flag!

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the minutes of a Regular Meeting held September 12, 1944; and of a Regular Adjourned Meeting held September 19, 1944, be approved as written. Councilman Cucci seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was read from the State, County and Municipal Workers of America, thanking the Council for the \$15.00 a month increase granted to City employees. Matter of record.

A communication was read from Julia M. Pingle, Clayton B. LaVeau and M. H. Pingle offering to purchase the North Torrance Water Well for the sum of \$100.00

Councilman Hitchcock moved that these people be notified and requested to meet with the Council as a whole, at some date convenient to them, to discuss this matter. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from Mrs. D. Mouzakis, 1023 Amapola Avenue, requesting that an oak tree in front of her property be cut down, as it makes her house very dark as well as damp.

In reply to an inquiry from Councilman Cucci, the Park Superintendent stated that this was a perfectly healthy tree and he would not recommend its removal. He said it had already been thinned out somewhat, but that it might be trimmed a little more.

Councilman Cucci moved that this communication be turned over to the Park Superintendent with instructions that he use his best judgment in an effort to satisfy this property owner as nearly as possible. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

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A communication was/from Jack Tramel and R. G. Van Valkenburg requesting a license to conduct a riding stable on Lot 4, Block 3, Tract No. 3757; advising that between fifteen and twenty horses would be maintained on the property; the signatures of three adjoining property owners appeared on the bottom of the letter, signifying their approval of the stables.

Councilman Cucci thought this matter came under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission and should be referred to them for a decision.

Engineer Jain advised that this property was located in an M-2 Zone, which permitted such use.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request be granted. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was lost by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert and Hitchcock. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Powell and Tolson. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Cucci advised that the Council had gotten into trouble in the past with the Civil Service Board and the Planning Commission for voting on matters that came under their jurisdiction, and he felt that this matter should be referred to the Planning Commission.

Councilman Powell said the reason for his objection was that he thought this location was too close to the residential area and rather close to one of the school buildings; that he wouldn't object to it if it was located further out, but that stables draw a lot of flies and might be objectionable in that area.

Councilman Powell moved that the communication be referred to the City Planning Commission for their recommendation and report to the Council. Councilman Cucci seconded the motion, which was carried; Councilman Gilbert dissenting.

A communication was read from J. O. Bishop, 2021 Carson Street, advising that rubbish and tin cans had not been picked up for about

two months, although the matter had been reported on several occasions, and requested that the matter receive prompt attention.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the communication be referred to the Street Superintendent, with instructions to see that the cans and rubbish are removed as soon as possible. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Gardena Cab Company making application for a taxicab license, in order that they may pick up fares for the return trip to Gardena.

Councilman Gilbert moved that the City Clerk be authorized to issue a license to the Gardena Cab Company. Councilman Cucci seconded the motion.

Some discussion followed, and Councilman Cucci stated that inasmuch as it was planned to hold a meeting with the Gardena City Council in the near future he thought it would be advisable to discuss the matter with them before taking any action, whereupon he withdrew his second to Councilman Gilbert's motion, which failed for lack of a second.

Councilman Cucci then moved that the application of the Gardena Cab Company be held in abeyance until the next regular meeting of the Council. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from Mrs. Bernice G. Davison, of the South Bay Humane Society, requesting that Mr. Roelof (Ralph) Blonk be appointed as Deputy Pondmaster for the City of Torrance; stating that Mr. Blonk has been associated with the South Bay Humane Society for the past year and has proven himself worthy of the appointment.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that this request be granted. Councilman Cucci seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from James J. Judge, Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars, requesting that this organization be furnished with the description of all lots sold for delinquent taxes by the City of Torrance, together with the amount of tax due at the day of sale, the name of the person or taxpayer against whom the tax was assessed, the date of sale of each such lot, and the amount paid by the purchaser to the City for each such lot.

Councilman Cucci remarked that this matter had already been taken care of at a previous meeting of the Council.

Clerk Bartlett advised that this was another communication which had just been received this day.

Mr. Judge, who was in the audience, stated that it was desired to obtain this information in regard to all property sold by the City commencing with the effective date of the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act, of December, 1940; and further stated that the previous letter which was submitted at the last Council meeting had not yet been complied with.

Clerk Bartlett advised that this information is a matter of public record in his office, and that anyone can come in and get the information themselves.

Councilman Powell stated that the motion, as passed at the last Council Meeting authorized the City Clerk to furnish such information.

Councilman Cucci advised Mr. Judge that it would take considerable time and effort to go back over the records from the time the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act became effective, and since the City was short of help he thought perhaps Mr. Judge wouldn't mind obtaining this information from the records himself.

Mr. Judge said he wouldn't know how to obtain the information, and that inasmuch as the Council had approved of his previous request he thought it would be complied with.

Clerk Bartlett advised that his previous request would be complied with but that he didn't have sufficient help to go back over the records since December, 1940.

Mr. Judge stated that the request, contained in his communication of September 26, 1944, could be disregarded.

A communication was read from Mrs. Cleo French, enclosing Business License No. 271, issued August 31, 1944, to conduct the business of altering clothes at 1314 Sartori Avenue; advising that she had been forced to vacate this store and requested a refund of the license fee.

Councilman Powell moved that this license fee be refunded to Mrs. French. Councilman Cucci seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from Mrs. Frances R. Blome, 1217 Madrid Avenue, requesting a refund of license fee paid June 7, 1944, to conduct a clothing store at 1335 El Prado; advising that she had sold her business on August 31, 1944, and was returning to the East, on account of illness.

Councilman Cucci moved that this request be granted. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented and read title to:

RESOLUTION NO. 1690

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, ACCEPTING BIDS FOR CERTAIN TAX DEEDED LANDS IN THE CITY OF TORRANCE, AND INSTRUCTING THE CITY CLERK TO APPLY TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOR SUCH TAX DEEDS.

Clerk Bartlett advised that these lots had been sold some time ago but the buyer had been unable to obtain priorities and the City had taken them back, and they were being resold to the Sound Investment Company of California.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Resolution No. 1690 be adopted. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented and read title to:

RESOLUTION NO. 1691

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE ALLOCATION OF STATE AID FOR CIVILIAN DEFENSE PURPOSES.

Councilman Gilbert moved that Resolution No. 1691 be adopted. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented a Lease for renewal, between the City of Torrance and the Pacific Electric Railway Company, covering a two foot strip of land along the Railway Company's right-of-way on Torrance Boulevard, between Border Avenue and Western Avenue, to be used for beautification purposes.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that this lease be renewed. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell moved that Ernest Lopp, who has served one year on the Fire Department, be granted an increase in salary of

\$10.00 per month, effective September 27, 1944.

Councilman Cucci seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Cucci advised that he had received several complaints regarding sand on sidewalks and streets in the vicinity of the Columbia Steel Company, caused by cars being parked on the vacant lots in that area, and suggested that the sand be cleaned up and thrown back onto the lots.

Councilman Cucci moved that the matter be referred to the Street Superintendent for action. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Cucci stated that at the time the tax rate was adopted some time ago, there was some discussion as to whether the water rates should be lowered or the tax rate decreased; and that Mr. Stanger had advised that they could do both. He advised that while the tax rate has been cut this year, the water rate will not be lowered until the beginning of the next fiscal year, and there would be a reduction from the present rate of \$1.25 for 1000 cu. ft. to \$1.00 for 800 cu. ft.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Robert R. Faren be employed as laborer in the Street Department on a temporary basis, at a salary of \$170.00 per month, effective September 25, 1944. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock stated that he had hoped to be able to approve the contract for the improvement of Torrance Boulevard, but due to the fact that the bids are just a little higher than the estimate it was thought advisable to defer action until they could check the budget, stating that the low bid was approximately \$59,000.00 which was about seven percent over the estimate.

Councilman Hitchcock stated that he had been advised that the Quandt Water Company in Walteria would like to sell out to the City, and thought it would be a good idea to have Mr. Stanger get in touch with some engineers and find out what it would cost to have an appraisal made; whereupon Councilman Hitchcock moved that Mr. Stanger be authorized to contact a licensed engineer and obtain the cost of making an appraisal of the Quandt Water Company, and submit same to the Council. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock advised that at the last meeting of the Council he was appointed a committee of one to investigate the liquor restrictions in the City of Torrance, as brought up by Mr. Wright at that meeting. He stated he had talked with Mr. Wright, and apparently it was his idea to get the fact before the public that it would be possible for the lot owners of this community to enforce the restriction prohibiting the manufacture or sale of liquor within the Torrance Tract. He said that as near as he could find out the City could do nothing about it; that it would be up to the property owners themselves, if they wished to take such action, but apparently it would be quite an expensive procedure.

Councilman Gilbert moved that George E. Sorenson be employed as Maintenance Man, in care of trees, in the Park Department, on a temporary basis, at a salary of \$170.00 per month, effective September 18, 1944. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Gilbert moved that Howard D. Webb be employed as Maintenance Man, in care of trees, in the Park Department, on a temporary basis, at a salary of \$170.00 per month, effective September 24, 1944. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor Tolson moved that an appropriation of \$100.00, plus tax, be authorized for the purchase of 2000 thirty-ride school commutation books, from the Dillingham Printing Company. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Cucci, Gilbert, Hitchcock, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor Tolson moved that the Water Department and the Bus Department be charged \$50.00 per month each, for bookkeeping services performed by the City Clerk's office, retroactive to July 1, 1944.

Councilman Cucci asked Clerk Bartlett if the supervisors of these two departments had been contacted and their approval obtained.

Clerk Bartlett advised that they had consented to this arrangement, and asked Mr. Ward, Manager of the Bus Department if he had been notified, to which Mr. Ward replied that he had not.

Clerk Bartlett then stated that he had understood that Mr. Hallanger had consulted Mr. Ward and obtained his approval; advising that due to the fact that the work is increasing, and his Department is doing a considerable volume of work for both the Water Department and the Bus Department, he thought a charge of \$50.00 was very reasonable; and that his department should not be expected to bear the expense of keeping the books for these other departments; and asked Mr. Ward if this was agreeable.

Mr. Ward stated that he was not prepared to say at this time, and said he would like to look into it before giving an opinion on the matter.

Some further discussion followed, and Councilman Gilbert suggested that since this action was to be retroactive to July 1st, it wouldn't make any particular difference if it was held off until the adjourned meeting, and acted upon at that time.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Mr. Ward be requested to confer with Mr. Bartlett about this matter and that it be brought up at the next meeting for action. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Cucci stated there was a rumor going about town that the City Council was anticipating using the El Prado Park for a skating rink, and said he would like to ease the minds of the residents along this street that no such idea was in their minds, and there was no truth to the matter.

Mayor Tolson inquired if the Council was prepared to take any action on the request of Mrs. V. D. Hancock to move a house trailer on her property at 24060 Hawthorne Avenue, where she conducts a service station.

Councilman Powell moved that this request be denied, for the reason that it is right on Highway 101 and he thought it was not a proper place for a trailer camp.

Councilman Cucci said he thought such matters should be through the Planning Commission, with a request for a variance.

Councilman Powell withdrew his motion, and moved that this request be referred to the Planning Commission for consideration. Councilman Gilbert seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson inquired if the City Attorney was prepared to report on the matter of the City buying hostess pins for the entertainers at the U.S.O. Headquarters in Torrance.

Clerk Bartlett replied that the City Attorney had submitted his opinion on this matter, which he read; in which Attorney McCall advised that in his opinion the City Council cannot legally appropriate funds to purchase such pins, for the reason that such an appropriation would be making a gift to a private organization which is prohibited by law.

Mayor Tolson inquired if there was any report on the request of Clifford F. Reid to vacate an alley in the Hollywood Riviera. Engineer Jain replied that he didn't know which alley this request referred to as he had not seen the letter, nor did he know the reason why this request was being made.

Engineer Jain stated that two matters had been referred to the City Planning Commission at tonight's meeting, and called attention to the fact that the Planning Commission has no regular meeting dates, and unless they are requested to have a regular meeting they possibly would not meet for several weeks or months, and inquired if it was the Council's pleasure to request the Planning Commission to meet at definite times.

After some discussion Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Engineer be requested to call a meeting of the Planning Commission, at their earliest convenience, to dispose of matters now pending. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Bernice G. Davison, of the South Bay Humane Society, entered a protest in regard to the condition of the sump holes in the oil fields; stating that these sump holes are a terrible hazard and that not a week passes by without several animals having to be pulled out of them; that just last week three pedigreed dogs were lost, and there have been horses, cows, goats, dogs, and cats caught in them.

She stated there are two sumps on Earl Street, south of Torrance Boulevard that are a special hazard. The wells have been abandoned and the sumps have been there so long that the oil has become as thick as tar, and a child or elderly person could easily fall into one of them.

Councilman Powell remarked that some time ago a man fell into a sump hole, and at that time he had urged that the City adopt an ordinance compelling the companies that own such sump holes to fence them.

Chief McMaster stated that this same subject came up about three or four years ago and at that time the matter was turned over to the City Attorney to take some action.

Attorney McCall stated that he had gone into the matter with the various departments and there is nothing that will take care of our case here, except an ordinance, and that will not be retroactive.

Councilman Cucci stated that an ordinance has been prepared and is ready for adoption, that will take care of sump holes.

Some further discussion followed; and a Mr. Palmer, in the audience, suggested to the Council that they contact the Ordinance Committee of the California Oil and Gas Association, in regard to their problems, and he said he felt sure most of the oil companies will be happy to cooperate in solving this problem.

Mayor Tolson requested Clerk Bartlett to contact this Committee.

Councilman Hitchcock suggested that if there are any particular sump holes that are a hazard, that they should report the matter to the Chief of Police, and he in turn will take it up with the oil companies; and said he did not think there would be any trouble in getting these sump holes fenced off.

Chief Stroh stated that this same problem came up several years ago, and believed the City Attorney has a list of all the bad sump holes in Torrance. He said that the worst ones are right near town and he did succeed in getting a fence placed around some of them, but that the ones Mrs. Davison referred to are on the Del Amo Lease and if the City has the authority to compel them to fence in these sump holes it should be done.

Mayor Tolson stated he would have an ordinance drawn to cover these matters.

Councilman Cucci stated that an ordinance was pending and requested Engineer Jain to revive this ordinance and make such additions as are necessary.

Mayor Tolson advised Mrs. Davison that an effort would be made to have the ordinance ready for the next meeting of the Council.

